

RICHARD SALTOUN

PRESS RELEASE

Ree Morton: Signs and Gestures

26 May – 18 July 2026



Richard Saltoun Gallery is pleased to present *Ree Morton: Signs and Gestures*, the first UK solo exhibition dedicated to the American conceptual and installation artist Ree Morton (1936–1977). A pioneering figure, Morton's work anticipated the turn towards installation, narrative, and performance that came to define artistic practice in the 1970s.

Born in 1936 in Ossining, New York, Ree Morton, a mother of three, graduated from art school in her 30s following a period as a nurse and a housewife. Describing her evolution as 'the feminist classic of out of the kitchen; into the studio', she led a brief but highly productive itinerant career, working and teaching across the United States before her sudden and untimely death at the age of 40.

Situated within the context of emerging feminist discourse and shifting understandings of the role of women artists, Morton resisted fixed categorisation. Her practice intersected with Minimalism, Post-Minimalism, and feminist art, while maintaining a position independent of any singular movement. She played with notions of the decorative in ways that deliberately

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disrupted the austere norms of Minimal and Post-Minimalist aesthetics, irreverently introducing vivid colour, ornamental gestures, and unexpected material flourishes. Over the course of a single decade, she developed a highly distinctive body of work that bridged conceptual rigor with personal experience.

Morton critically engaged with cultural constructions of femininity, including ideals of motherhood, fragility, decoration, and the “girlish”. In 1974, she began working with celastic—a malleable textile more commonly used in theatre—which she shaped into ribbons, banners, and flowers drawn from traditionally feminine visual vocabularies. Through this material, she developed a subversive visual language that both reclaims and destabilises decorative form, challenging hierarchies of medium while foregrounding the politics of female imagery.

The exhibition brings together a focused selection of works from Ree Morton’s brief yet prolific career, foregrounding the development of her practice across painting, drawing, and sculptural forms. It includes early canvases from 1970 that explore form and repetition in dialogue with post-minimalist concerns, alongside an example of large-scale cartographic work on paper, *Game Map Drawing I–VI* (1972–1973).



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The presentation then traces Morton's shift toward sculptural assemblage, where her use of wood and logs signals a decisive move away from conventional approaches to artmaking and toward a more expansive, materially driven practice. It culminates in two works from 1976, *Regional Piece* and *Prince and Princess* from the monumental installation *Signs of Love*, which articulate her turn toward personal narrative, kitsch imagery, and her distinctive use of celastic.

Presented in collaboration with the Estate of Ree Morton, with support of Allan Schwartzman, this will be the first ever solo presentation of Ree Morton in the UK.

Notes for Editors

Ree Morton

Ree Morton was born in Ossining, New York in 1936 and died in Chicago in 1977. She was included in the Whitney Biennial, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York in 1973 and 1977. Her work has been exhibited at Kunstmuseum Bochum (2024–25); Institute of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (2020); Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia (2018 and 1973); Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid (2015); The Drawing Center, New York (2009); Generali Foundation, Vienna (2008-9); Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (1990 and 1974); Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York (1985); The New Museum, New York (1980), touring to Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston (1980); University of Colorado Art Galleries, Boulder (1980); Albright-Knox Gallery, Buffalo, New York (1981) and Renaissance Society at the University of Chicago (1981).

Richard Saltoun Gallery

Founded in 2012, Richard Saltoun Gallery is based in Mayfair, London. The gallery specialises in contemporary art, with an emphasis on Feminist, Conceptual and Performance art from the 1960s onwards. It is guided by a strong focus on rediscovering the work of important yet under-recognised artists through presentations at its locations in London's Mayfair and Rome, extensive research, partnerships, online shows, publishing, events and participation in art fairs around the world.

Since its inception, Richard Saltoun Gallery has been driven by an interest in serving a wider purpose and is now widely recognised for its critically and socially- engaged programme. In 2019, the gallery launched a year-long initiative titled *100% Women* that aimed to address gender inequality in the art world, and it's now considered a leader in the representation of female artists.

Images:

1. Ree Morton, *Untitled (Stretcher Piece)*, 1974. © The Estate of Ree Morton. Courtesy of Richard Saltoun Gallery & Allan Schwartzman.
2. Ree Morton, *Prince and Princess* from *Signs of Love*, 1976. © The Estate of Ree Morton. Courtesy of Richard Saltoun Gallery.

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